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Trotter Institute Review

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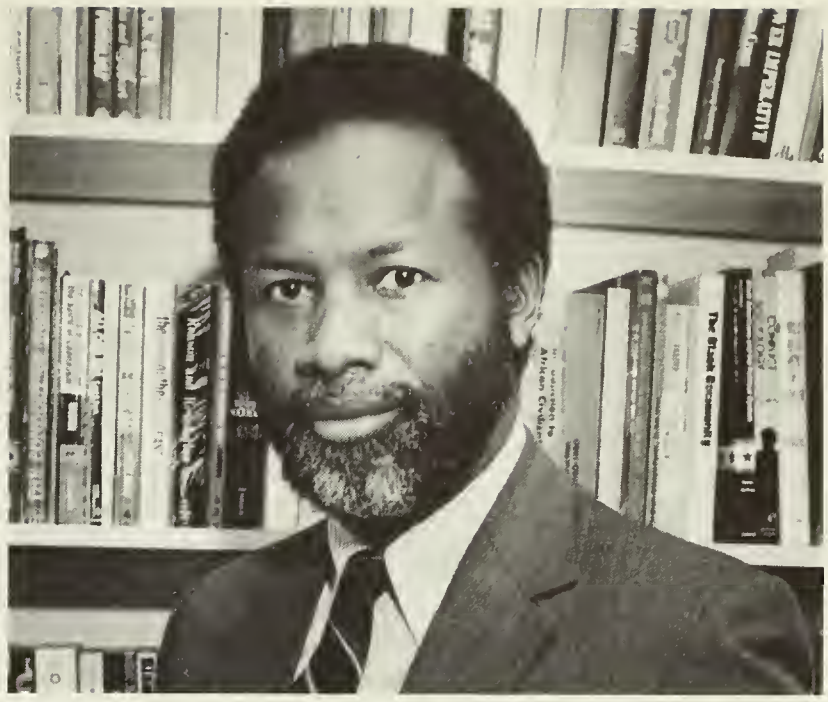
Commentary

The "Negro" Problem in the 1980s

by
Wornie L. Reed



Since 1984 the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Science has been conducting a study on the status of black Americans. And since 1986 the William Monroe Trotter Institute has been conducting a similar study. The Trotter Institute study was developed because we wanted to have the widest possible discussion of the present condition of blacks and the social policy implications of that condition.

In the 1980s the black community is plagued by problems, among them unemployment, underemployment, poverty, crime, and poor health. The gap between blacks and whites in economic status is not closing. Consequently, there is a great need to examine trends, evaluate programs, and recommend social policies to address these problems. So, four years ago, with $2 million in funding from foundations, the NRC began a study to report on the status of blacks from 1940 to the present and on the *future status of blacks in the United States.*

The NRC study, which is billed as an update of Gunnar Myrdal's study, *An American Dilemma*, has faced severe criticisms. Many critics have complained about the limited involvement of black scholars in the conceptualization, planning, and development of the project. They note that many black scholars who are prominent in some of the areas under study have been conspicuously omitted from the study panels.

Since the NRC study is intended as an update of the Myrdal study, it might be useful to review the Myrdal work. Myrdal was recruited to direct that study from Sweden, a country with no history of colonialization and no apparent vested interest in the history of black-white relations. The work, which was published in 1944, reigned for nearly a quarter of a century as the authoritative study of black life in the United States. There was no competing major study.

In a masterfully crafted argument Myrdal concluded that the racial oppression of blacks in America was the result of an American conflict, an American dilemma: the discrepancy between an egalitarian ideology and racially discriminatory behavior. He addressed the real issue, racial oppression; however, he presented it in combination with a very positive statement about America, about the American Creed, thereby making his overall assessment of racial problems more palatable to his audience.

An American Dilemma became a classic within American social science, and it reached a broad readership. For two decades it was the definitive survey of black Americans. Civil rights activists, ministers, teachers, and social workers used the book as a reference in their struggles against segregation.

In spite of its widespread influence in the black community as well as in the Northern white community, the study had its black critics. Many questioned whether racism could be reduced by addressing the contradiction in Americans' conscience. On the other hand, liberal social scientists were reluctant to criticize a book that forcefully condemned racism and spread this message to a wide audience.

Some social scientists argued that Myrdal paid too little attention to institutional racism, and that the elimination of racial discrimination and domination would require the addressing of social structural problems and institutional change. In a significant critique the novelist Ralph Ellison applauded the book but situated the Myrdal study in a historical line of social science writings that had done more to maintain the status quo for blacks than to change it. (See the related article by William Edwards in this issue.)

A Harvard professor proclaimed in the 1920s that social science was the means by which the United States would *save* itself from the various ethnic groups that were beginning to populate the country. By that he meant that the new science could be used to differentiate, evaluate, and *treat* these disparate persons. There have been a number of studies on blacks since then, with the Myrdal study being the most notable. However, there were also studies by

Moynihan (on the black family) and Coleman (on black education) that were less well received by the black community.

But the issue is not social science itself. Rather, it is the use to which it is put (i.e., what is the research question?). Increasingly, blacks are insisting on being more than just the objects of study. Black social scientists are insisting on being involved in studies on blacks and participating fully in the resulting social policy formulations. As a result of these concerns and considerations, the Trotter Institute study was initiated.

Critics of the NRC's study are concerned about the ramifications of a major study of black Americans in the current ideological climate. There has been a dismantling of the Great Society Programs and a cease-fire in the war on poverty. And some critics are concerned that a major study by a prestigious academic organization like the NRC might serve to validate current trends towards limiting the role of government in addressing the ills of society, especially those concerning race. Furthermore, these critics contend that the NRC study groups, while including a number of persons of integrity and commitment to principles of equality and fairness, are dominated by scholars who rule out both historical oppression of blacks and contemporary discrimination against blacks as major influences in the present condition of black communities.

Over 50 scholars have contributed to the Trotter Institute study. This multidisciplinary group of scholars includes persons from all sections of the country and from varied settings—private and public universities, major universities, historically black universities, and private agencies. Core participants in the study were organized into six study groups. Wornie Reed, Director of the Trotter Institute, is Executive Director of the study. James E. Blackwell, Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and Lucius J. Barker, Gellhorn Professor of Public Affairs and Professor of Political Science at Washington University, serve as Co-Chairs of the project. Tentatively, the findings are scheduled to be released late this year or early in 1989.

The names of the study groups and the study group leaders follow:

(1) **Education:** Charles V. Willie (Chair), School of Education, Harvard University, and Antoine Garibaldi (Vice-Chair), Department of Education, Xavier University (New Orleans); (2) **Employment, Income, and Occupations:** William A. Darity, Jr. (Chair), Department of Economics, University of North Carolina, and Barbara Jones (Vice-Chair), Department of Economics and Finance, Prairie View A&M University; (3) **Political Participation and the Administration of Justice:** Michael Preston (Chair), Department of Political Science, University of Southern California, and Diane Pinderhughes (Vice-Chair), Department of Political Science, University of Illinois; (4) **Social and Cultural Change and Continuity:** Alphonso Pinkney (Chair), Department of Sociology, Hunter College, and James Turner (Vice-Chair), Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University; (5) **Health Status and Demography:** William A. Darity, Sr. (Chair), School of Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Stanford Roman (Vice-Chair), Dean, Morehouse Medical College; (6) **The Family:** Robert Hill (Chair), Research Consultant, and Andrew Billingsley (Vice-Chair), Department of Family and Community Development, University of Maryland.

Wornie L. Reed, Ph.D., is Chairperson of the Department of Black Studies and Director of the William Monroe Trotter Institute, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

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Dynamics of Minority Education: An Index to the Status of Race and Ethnic Relations in the United States[1]

by
James E. Blackwell

Presented on the Occasion of His Retirement
April 21, 1988

Introduction of Professor James E. Blackwell

by Wornie L. Reed

Welcome to the fifth in our series of Distinguished Lectures this academic year. I am honored to present today's distinguished lecturer; however, this task fills me with mixed emotions as I am presenting Professor James Blackwell in what is his valedictory lecture as a regular faculty member at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Professor Blackwell has held teaching positions at five universities in addition to the University of Massachusetts at Boston. He has lectured widely throughout the United States, and in countries in Africa and Asia. He is an honored scholar—the author of eight books, fourteen research monographs, and many articles and chapters in journals and books. Among the voluntary positions he has held in professional organizations, he has been President of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, President of the Eastern Sociological Society, and founding President of the Caucus of Black Sociologists.

For his scholarship and for his professional contributions, Professor Blackwell has earned numerous awards, including election to membership in the prestigious Sociological Research Association, the Spivak Award and the DuBois-Johnson-Frazier Award of the American Sociological Association, and the Chancellor's Medal, the highest honor bestowed by the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

Professor Blackwell exemplifies as well as any scholar the use of scholarship in the interest of social policy. What impresses many of us about him is that, unlike some scholars who engage in social science scholarship for scholarship purposes only, Professor Blackwell uses the tools and techniques of social science to advance society.

Although Professor Blackwell has traveled across this country speaking and consulting on critical issues, especially education, he is probably best known as a mentor. Many of you may know that "mentoring" is the concept and practice that Professor Blackwell advances in his book, Mainstreaming Outsiders: The Production of the Black Professionals. *Significantly, he has been performing this role on a national scale for all of his academic career. Although the University has not had a doctoral program in the Social Sciences in the 18 years he has taught here, Professor Blackwell has more postdoctoral students across the country than many professors who regularly supervise dissertations in their departments. He has dozens of young scholars across this country whom he has advised throughout their careers, and many of them have sent their best wishes for today's occasion.*

One final note about Professor Blackwell. In the old "down home" saying: "He does not bite his tongue."

Introduction

Throughout this century scholars and legal experts have devoted special attention to the issue of race and ethnicity as a determinant of life chances in the United States. Some of the more influential treatises in the social and behavioral sciences, many of which have become classics, addressed fundamental, derivative (and often more compelling) extensions of race and ethnicity. They focused on such topics as race-based group dominance, ethnic stratification, structural inequality based upon racial or ethnic identification, beliefs in inherent racial superiority and status privilege, class exploitation, the nature of prejudice, and the maintenance of power over groups defined as subordinate in an ethnically and racially stratified social system. All of these

themes are clearly related to the current status of minorities in higher education.

At the turn of this century, following the 1896 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, W.E.B. DuBois insightfully predicted in *Souls of Black Folk*[2] that "the color line" would become the most powerful instrument for structuring black-white relations during the remainder of the twentieth century. Oliver C. Cox[3] carefully formulated the connecting links between capitalism, the spread of racial dominance, class subjugation, and group exploitation. Gunnar Myrdal[4] provided an institutional framework for understanding the degree to which racial apartheid had become deeply entrenched in the American social and political fabric, and he also brought conceptual clarity to the process by which prevailing patterns of institutional discrimination had been incorporated as norms, expectations, and ritualistic behavior. Samuel Stouffer[5] argued in *The American Soldier* that racial conflict could indeed be reduced. Through greater interracial contact and social interaction across racial and ethnic boundaries, demeaning stereotypes about members of minority groups could be eliminated. Allport and Kramer[6] asserted that to fully understand *the nature of prejudice* it is necessary to deal with the multidimensionality of prejudice. Prejudice is essentially an attitudinal construct composed of a system of beliefs and emotions easily translatable into discriminatory behavior. More recently, Reginald Horsman[7], in *Race and Manifest Destiny*, traced the spread of the white supremacy doctrine from philologists, who were convinced that "the march of culture" was from East to West, that "God's chosen people" were those Europeans and their descendants who pioneered in European settlements, who conquered indigenous populations through warfare, trickery and deceit, and who relished "manifest destiny" and territorial expansion for their own benefit in the name of the Christian God.

In treatises by DuBois, Cox, Myrdal, Stouffer, and Horsman, the common element, along with the recognition of race-based dominance in the United States, is the articulation of a race-based ideology of entitlements and privileges. According to this ideology, membership in the dominant white population, irrespective of the qualifications and merits of individual persons, entitles one to *first choice*, to primacy of opportunity, to primacy of the access to education, jobs, income, wealth, status, and power. Membership in minority groups, on the other hand, entitles one to substantially less because minorities are seen as outsiders, pariahs, inferiors.

This ideology is not countenanced by the guiding principles of American democracy as set forth in the Constitution of the United States and its Amendments. Stances of this sort are contrary to the countless Congressional Acts that have codified the rights of all citizens. Yet it is precisely because of the endurance of such beliefs, their persistence in institutionalized patterns of race-based discrimination, that the NAACP and the NAACP-LDF mounted a legal assault on all forms of de jure and de facto discrimination. That is why they organized attacks against all manifestations of prejudice and segregation, including racial exclusions in higher education, which prevent minorities from sharing in the benefits of education.

> *. . . retrogression [has] come to characterize the condition of minorities in higher education.*

Historical and Legal Considerations

In order to more fully appreciate the current status of minorities in education, it is crucial to recall some of the historical events that provide a context for the interplay between race relations in the larger society and the condition of minorities in educational institutions. It is especially salient to mention here outcomes of influential U.S. Supreme Court decisions: *The University of Maryland v. Murray* (1935); *Missouri ex rel Gaines v. Canada* (1938); *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma* (1948); *Sweatt v. Painter* (Texas, 1950); and *McLauren v. Oklahoma Regents* (1950).[8] The principles attacked and declared unconstitutional in these cases are instructive with respect to the degree to which members of a dominant group will deliberately construct legalistic barriers in order to maintain their favored position and restrict the rights of any group perceived as a threat.

Imagine a state law or an institutional practice that prevents minorities from attending a publicly-supported graduate or professional school even though the taxes imposed on members of that minority group help to finance that institution. Imagine a state policy by which minorities are awarded "out-of-state tuition grants" to attend a graduate or professional school anywhere outside their own home state so long as they do not attempt to desegregate an institution within their own home state. Imagine a state legislative practice of establishing racially separate, makeshift professional schools for blacks as a means of claiming adherence to the principle of "separate-but-equal," the purpose being to deny blacks the opportunity to enroll in white "flagship" state-supported institutions. How demeaning and cruel to finally admit blacks to a previously all-white graduate school, under court order, and then separate blacks from whites in the classroom. All of these practices were declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in the cases

cited.[9] Such declarations of unconstitutionality facilitated matriculation of students from minority groups into institutions then operating under the principle of de jure segregation. The desegregation mandates explicit in those court decisions were designed to promote equity, to eliminate racial disparities in education, to foster production of substantially larger numbers of minority professionals. They strengthened multiculturality in higher education.

Without question, this process would not have advanced to its present level of success had it not been for the second phase of the Civil Rights Movement[10]—the period between 1954 and 1972, beginning with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) and ending with the First District Court decision in *Adams v. Richardson* (1972). It is especially crucial for students in this generation, of all racial and ethnic groups, to develop a sense of history. In studying this period in American social and political history we can comprehend the role of organizational leaders, can appreciate the importance of positive leadership at the federal level, can understand the power of interracial cooperation and interethnic coalitions among college students, civic organizations, and ordinary citizens—all committed to ending the monopoly of one group over resources and determined to create a society that expands constitutional guarantees to all its citizens, irrespective of race or ethnicity.

I often look back on the 1960s with much nostalgia—neither misplaced nor romanticized—for that was indeed a time of unparalleled *optimism and determination*, of commitment to the belief that by working together across racial and ethnic lines it was possible to create a more just and humane society. Hundreds of thousands of Americans truly believed that collective efforts could open up previously locked doors so that blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans and other Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians could matriculate in a college or university of their choice.

Activists of that period advocated federal intervention and came to believe that the U.S. Department of Justice fully supported equality of opportunity and the rights of minorities as well as those of the white population. That belief stands in sharp contrast to the viewpoint held by so many Americans in 1988 that the U.S. Department of Justice is *against* justice for minority groups and that the Attorney General of the United States supports efforts to return this country to conditions characteristic of the pre-1954 period. During that second phase of the Civil Rights Movement there was a growing respect for due process at the federal level. Many Americans—of all racial and ethnic groups—looked to the national level for moral leadership. There was also leadership within many colleges and universities that set a tone of compliance with the law, with the moral imperative that we achieve a desegregated society. Few understood then the depth of hatred and suspicion of minorities (and of their sympathizers) represented in the person of J. Edgar Hoover, the Chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, his infiltrators, and agents provocateurs. Nevertheless, in retrospect, it is my belief that we have every reason to look back on that period with excitement, and with the realization that the collective energies of interracial coalitions, the sustained efforts of blacks themselves, and the support of the federal government did appreciably expand educational opportunity in the United States.

Expanding Educational Opportunity

Consider the fact that in 1960 only 33% of all blacks between the ages of 25 and 34 had completed four years of high school compared to 61% of all whites. By 1982, 79% of all blacks, in contrast to 87% of all whites in this age cohort, were high school graduates. Observe also the fact that in 1960 only 4% of all blacks between the ages of 25 and 34 had earned a college degree. In the same year the figure was 12% for all whites in that group. By 1982, while the proportion of blacks with a college degree increased by slightly more than 300% (from 4% to 13%), the percent of whites doubled to 25%. However, the 13% blacks with a college degree in 1982 was only slightly more than the 12% white college graduates in 1960.[11] These figures underscore the relativity of progress, as blacks are continually confronted with economic instability and structural inequality in American society. In statistical terms, however, progress in educational attainment among black Americans and other minorities is indeed substantial.

In one decade alone (1970–80), Hispanics registered impressive increases in the proportion who had completed high school. The high school completion rate among Hispanics over the age of 25 rose from 24.2% to 39.5% among Mexican Americans and from 25.4% to 38.4% for Puerto Ricans.[12]

Pressure exerted on educational institutions by minority students, especially blacks and their allies, coupled with the enactment of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,[13] accelerated college enrollment in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Between 1960 and 1972 the number of blacks enrolled in college climbed from 137,000 to 438,000. By 1981 some 750,000 blacks were matriculated in a college or university. Almost 300,000 blacks were involved in some other form of post-secondary education. In 1960 about 80% of all black students in college matriculated in historically black colleges and universities (HBCU). In 1988 about 82% of all blacks in higher education are enrolled at a predominantly white institution (PWI).[14]

During the 1960s and early 1970s special efforts were organized to promote recruitment of blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans for graduate and professional schools. These actions were based on the premise that equality of educational opportunity really meant the development of all of the nation's talent, irrespective of race, ethnicity, and social class. Development of this talent was seen as in the best interest of the nation's colleges and universities and in the best interest of the society as a whole. This notion was consistent with an increasingly widespread agreement that no race should have exclusive rights to resources and that educational opportunity is central to economic and political empowerment of the relatively powerless. It is also essential for the production of informed leadership over a broad spectrum of racial and ethnic minority groups.

In my study, *Mainstreaming Outsiders: The Production of Black Professionals*, substantial documentation is provided with respect to expanded recruitment, enrollment, and graduation of blacks from graduate and professional schools since 1960.[15] That evidence reveals the degree to which expanded recruitment and related factors facilitated access, matriculation, retention, and graduation of blacks. That evidence underscores a national commitment to expanded educational opportunity and power sharing, a national sense that this was morally right and in the nation's best interest.

Consequences of that commitment are revealed in the following illustrative data. In the 15-year period between 1970 and 1985, the number of blacks who earned medical degrees increased by 9,124. The number of blacks who earned a degree in dentistry rose by 2,296, and more than 300 additional blacks were awarded the Doctor of Optometry degree. In addition, some 15,451 blacks obtained a first professional degree in engineering, 10,000 earned the Master of Social Work degree (MSW), an additional 3,000 were graduated from law schools; and between 1973 and 1985 alone 11,795 doctorates were earned by black American citizens.[16] Despite such progress, with the exception of the field of social work, blacks are underrepresented in all professions. They comprise 3% or less of all the professions mentioned here. Hispanics and Native Americans are even more noticeably underrepresented in the professions.

Achievements in the production of professionals among blacks and other minorities were not equally shared by the 2,500 colleges and universities in the United States. A brief examination of production rates of blacks in selected professions is illuminating on this point. The medical colleges of Howard University, Meharry Medical College, and Morehouse College (all HBCUs) enroll about 20% of all black students in medicine; but the combined enrollment of black students in these three institutions exceeds the combined black student enrollment of 74 of the 123 predominantly white medical colleges. The four colleges of pharmacy located at HBCUs account for approximately 40% of all black students in that field. The ten colleges or schools of engineering found at HBCUs enroll about 40% of all black students pursuing an engineering degree in the nation's 182 schools and colleges of engineering. The School of Veterinary Medicine at Tuskegee University (another HBCU) continues to graduate approximately 80% of all black recipients of the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree; there are 27 colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States.[17]

Retrogression in Minority Education

Except for a short-lived upsurge in affirmative action in higher education, evidenced by increased recruitment and hiring of faculty members from minority groups, stagnation was the dominant characteristic of the 1970s. Since 1981, just as retrogression has been observed in the status of race relations within American society in general, so has retrogression come to characterize the condition of minorities in higher education. A number of factors can be cited: the precarious economic position of minorities, a condition impacting on their ability to afford higher education; a decline in institutional commitment to the recruitment, matriculation, and graduation of minority group students; a declining enrollment of black students in colleges and graduate and professional schools; and a decline in the presence of blacks in faculty positions in colleges and universities.

When unfavored groups seek to alter or transform existing arrangements, the groups in power will adopt strategies designed to halt or retard the efforts of such groups. Dominant groups may also shift support from one minority group to another, favoring as more "acceptable" those groups who are "less threatening," or "model minorities," or "deserving groups," or those who do not "ask too much too soon."

Groups in power exercise authority to establish standards, to determine procedural grounds and "rules of the game," to make declarations of normative requirements and expectations—actions which function as gatekeeping mechanisms. An example of this would be changes in admissions standards, the reliance on quantitative criteria to determine eligibility. In practice, the mechanism is fundamentally exclusionary.

Dominant group members determine the criteria that must be fulfilled by persons of lower rank who seek advancement. In principle the criteria are "universal." In practice, however, they are so particular as to perpetuate the system of structured inequality. Many minorities become victims of a revolving door system.

It is understandable, though not acceptable, that educational attainment among minorities is hampered by deeply entrenched economic inequities. Minorities are concentrated in what Edna Bonacich and others have characterized as the lower tier of a dual or split labor market system. Few are able to obtain high-paying, upper-tier jobs. The unemployment rate among blacks is twice that of whites. The unemployment rate among Puerto Ricans is three times that of whites in some cities. One-third of the black population and almost 30% of the Hispanic population are mired in poverty. Yet the cost of a college education escalates year by year, even as the requirement of a baccalaureate degree becomes the minimum expectation of potential employees.

Retrogression is apparent also in the disturbing slippages throughout what Alexander Astin referred to as "the educational pipeline." These slippages are quite ironic and paradoxical: at precisely the same time that the high school completion rate among blacks, for instance, is increasing, their college-going rate is declining significantly. Astin showed that in 1982 some 72% of blacks graduated from high school but only 29% entered college; 12% obtained a baccalaureate degree; 8% entered a graduate or professional school; only 4% completed graduate or professional education. The high school completion rate among Hispanics was then at 55%; their college completion rate was 7%; only 2% completed a graduate or professional school degree. By contrast, white Americans had a high school completion rate of 83%, a college-going rate of 38%, a college completion rate of 23%, a graduate or professional school entry rate of 14%, and 8% completed graduate or professional school. In a soon-to-be-released study by Astin's Institute at UCLA, his researchers argue that conditions in the educational pipeline remain relatively unchanged. However, I, along with Arbiter, Thomas, and others, remain convinced that the evidence shows a worsening situation for particular minority groups, especially the black population.

For example, Christoffel[18] showed that as a result of the decline in the college-going rate among blacks, we now have at least 40,000 fewer blacks enrolled in college than was the case in 1976. We also know that the college-going rate among blacks fell to only 22.5% in 1986. Since 1976 the college-going rate among Hispanic students has dropped from 22.5% to 19.8%, while that of white students rose, albeit slightly, from 29.8% to 30.5% during the same period.

Just as ethnic stratification dominates the American society, that system functions in higher education so as to produce a concentration of minority students in two-year institutions. For instance, it is estimated that 54% of all Hispanic college students are currently enrolled in two-year institutions. This figure stands in contrast to the 36% of white college students and the 43% of all black college students now matriculated in two-year institutions.

The problem with this distribution is complicated by the relative paucity of blacks and Hispanic college students who are able to transfer from two-year institutions to four-year colleges and universities. Hilton and Shrader[19] have shown that about 25% of all Hispanic students and less than one-fifth (18.3%) of all black two-year college students, in contrast to almost a third (30.3%) of all white two-year college students, transfer to a four-year institution. This lack of transferability is yet another impediment impacting on graduate enrollment and the production of doctoral degrees among minority students.

This situation also reflects, in part, the lowered quality of precollege training that all too many pupils in urban schools receive. The plight of urban education is poignantly captured in a study financed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and reported by Ernest Boyer. It describes conditions in a Cleveland high school in the following manner:

> . . . near a once bustling intersection of commerce, but so many surrounding buildings have been raised that now the vacant land makes the school look like a forgotten outpost in an underdeveloped country. A sprawling playground is rendered useless by a carpet of glass. Inside, lavatories for students have no light bulbs; the stalls have no doors, and there is no toilet paper. There is an atmosphere of hopelessness among students, mirroring the outside world.[20]

Despite the clarion cry for educational reform generated by *A Nation at Risk* some five years ago, the rhetoric has not been matched either by the appropriation of funds for learning resources or by the allocation of adequate human resources for fostering the kinds of improvements desired by urban educators. Without question, the situation described by Boyer is repeated time and time again across the nation, from Boston to Los Angeles, North, South, East and West. By the same token, countless numbers of minority students who graduate from urban schools where learning is stressed and self-discipline is internalized, where learning resources are available and the curriculum is excellent, where teachers and administrators demonstrate concern for students while exacting high standards, perform well on rigorous admissions tests and matriculate at some of the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities. An example is Banneker High School in Washington, D.C., where 96% of the graduates continue on to college. But outstanding urban public school graduates may still be thwarted by economic disability, by improper counseling and guidance, by lack of information, or by the inattention of college recruiters.

Declining college enrollment has led to a down-

turn in graduate school enrollment among blacks but not among Hispanic and Asian college graduates. Between 1976 and 1984 blacks experienced a 22.4% decline (or a loss of some 15,000 students) in graduate school matriculation. In other words, full- and part-time graduate school enrollment among black students fell from, approximately, 65,000 to 50,000 students. In 1988 less than 5% of all graduate students are black compared to 6.1% in 1976. By contrast, Hispanics have experienced a 14.4% increase in graduate school enrollment over the same time. In absolute terms, this percent change means an actual rise from 20,234 in 1976 to 23,144 Hispanic graduate students in 1984, the last year for which reported data are available. In fact, Hispanic students comprise only 2.2% of all graduate school enrollment. Students from the Asian/Pacific Islander population increased their numbers from 18,446 to 27,318 in graduate schools across the country.

Such enrollment patterns are not unexpectedly reflected in doctoral degree production rates. They also help to account partially for the current losses in the number of blacks holding faculty positions in colleges and universities. This fact may be illustrated by data from the six-year period between 1980 and 1986. In the context of an overall decline in doctorate production during that period, white Americans claimed 89.3% of all doctoral degrees conferred on American citizens. The most conspicuous loss in the number of earned doctoral degrees conferred was observed among black Americans, whose share of doctoral degrees fell by 275, from 4.1% in 1980 to 3.5% in 1986. Puerto Ricans experienced an increase, but only from 69 doctorates in 1980 to a total of 137 in 1986. Puerto Ricans constitute only 0.6% of all doctorates earned by U.S. citizens. Mexican Americans also registered an increase in the number of doctoral degrees earned, from 109 doctorates in 1980 to 182 in 1986. Asian Americans received 459 doctorates (1.9%) in 1980 and 527 (2.3%) in 1986. Significantly, only 820 doctoral degrees were awarded black Americans in 1986.

This maldistribution is troubling; it bespeaks barriers imposed by faculty in the fields not selected; it bespeaks a general insensitivity to the need to expand access.

Blacks, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans who do receive doctoral degrees tend to be concentrated in education. Even in that concentration, *these groups are underrepresented* with respect to the total number of doctorates conferred in education. This maldistribution is troubling; it bespeaks barriers imposed by faculty in the fields not selected; it bespeaks a general insensitivity to the need to expand access. This situation is especially noticeable in the physical and natural sciences.

Note that in 1986 only one Native American, five black Americans, three Puerto Ricans, and three Mexican Americans received a doctorate in mathematics. Only one black American, two Puerto Ricans, no Mexican Americans, and no Native Americans were awarded a doctoral degree in computer science. In engineering the number of doctorates conferred on blacks was 14, on Puerto Ricans 11, on Native Americans 6, on Mexican Americans 5, and on Asian Americans 80.

These groups fared only slightly better in the life sciences. For example, in 1986 in the biological sciences the number of doctoral degrees earned by blacks was 40, by Native Americans 18, by Puerto Ricans 13, by Mexican Americans 9, and by Asian Americans 124. Clearly, the departments comprising the physical and life sciences have not done a good job of attracting minorities as undergraduate majors or as graduate students. These same departments offer few graduate research and teaching assistantships and few mentoring arrangements to minorities.

Is there any wonder, then, that blacks and Hispanics are underrepresented in faculty positions? The decline in absolute numbers and percentage of faculty positions held by blacks is especially alarming in 1988. When one looks at 1975, blacks represented 4.4% of all faculty positions in American colleges. In 1988, it is estimated that blacks comprise slightly less than 4% of such positions; and that percentage is deceptive inasmuch as it includes blacks employed in faculty positions in historically black colleges and universities. When those numbers are disaggregated, it is more likely that blacks represent slightly more than 1% of all faculty positions in predominantly white institutions, and that number appears to be in steady decline. As the number of blacks decreased in faculty positions, the absolute number and percent of Asians and Hispanics continued to rise between 1975 and 1983. For example, during that period the number of Asians in faculty positions rose from 9,763 (2.2%) to 16,899 (3.5%). The number of Hispanics rose from 6,323 (1.4%) to 7,456 (1.5%) during the same period. White faculty positions increased from 409,947 to 440,505, to 91% of all faculty positions.

Explanations for Retrogression

This pattern of retrogression and retreat from the pursuit of equity between minority groups and the white population began with a well-orchestrated and sophisticated attack on affirmative action in higher education, especially pronounced in the Bakke case. The media have increasingly misinterpreted and distorted the goal of affirmative action, which was and is to expand the diversity of the student body, the faculty, and the administration of colleges and universities. As a result, we witnessed considerable intergroup tension, mounting acrimo-

niousness and divisiveness in which minority groups were pitted against each other. Many whites felt threatened (even when only one minority was hired) by what they viewed as "an intrusion" by minorities in higher education. Many whites were resentful of the higher salaries offered to minorities whose specialization was in a discipline in which they were a scarce commodity. It was convenient for the intolerant to disregard the fundamental laws of supply and demand, easy for them to resort to such pejorative expressions as "preferential treatment" even when they knew that a preference for whites was a persistent feature of institutional racism.

This situation was reinforced and elevated to a new pitch with the arrival of the Reagan administration. Its avowed intention was to destroy affirmative action programs, even voluntary ones, indeed to dismantle most of the programs that had moved this country toward the achievement of constitutional guarantees and rights for all American citizens. Reagan and Meese, along with William Bradford Reynolds, communicated a clear and startling message: previous affirmative action policies were either to be abrogated or not enforced. Grievances would be stalled. Circumvention strategies would be condoned in order to maintain the preferred treatment of dominant groups to the detriment of members of minority groups. The hostility of the administration was shown in the appointments to key administrative positions of people indifferent to the rights of minorities, in the steadfast refusal of the President of the United States to respond favorably to requests from the Congressional Black Caucus to discuss basic problems of structural inequalities. The current resurgence of racism is hardly surprising in this content.

In this atmosphere of callous disregard for the rights of all citizens, of indifference to the debilitating consequences of structural inequities between the races, "respectable bigotry" arises as in the case of racial jokes told by high level staff members in the Reagan administration. The perception that America is exclusively a white culture dedicated to the preservation and sanctity of white privilege is thus reinforced, and thus racism has had a resurgence in American society as well as on college campuses. The National Council of Churches, the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP and other groups have noted an alarming upsurge in anti-minority attacks during the past six years: murder, maiming, desecration of churches and synagogues, and other forms of racial/ethnic violence. Witness the boldness of the KKK, the White Aryan Nation, and similar groups in staging marches and using talk shows on cable television to spread a gospel of white and Nazi supremacy. Witness the activities of skinheads and other neo-Nazi groups in recent years.

In addition, within the past two years alone we have observed innumerable instances of anti-minority hostility—physical assaults, rapes and attempted rapes, verbal abuse, property destruction, attacks by white students wearing KKK garb or "Reagan masks" on blacks students at PWIs. Where is the national leadership when such incidents occur? Where is the national denunciation of such intolerable behavior? Where is the U.S. Department of Justice or the Attorney General of the United States? Who arises to assure the American people that such activities violate the principles of American society? We hear nothing! As a result, perpetrators feel assured that their deeds will not be subjected to punishment. This situation is social dynamite, and it needs to be addressed at all levels of leadership and by the rank and file American citizen.

Suggestions for Change

Although intergroup conflict is a high probability in situations characterized by multiethnicity, conflict resolution is possible. While inequities in college admission and college and graduate school production are apparent and the downturn in the number of black faculty is real, these situations can be corrected. Indeed, in 1988 some of these issues are being addressed, and concrete remedies to the fundamental problem of inequity in higher education are being proposed by such groups as the American Council on Education and the Southern Education Foundation and by such institutions as Ohio State University, the University of California/Los Angeles, Texas A&M University, the University of Michigan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Massachusetts/Boston. What can be done?

First, people like Mr. Reagan, Mr. Meese, Mr. Bennett, and others who share their views about American society must recognize that America is a multicultural society comprised of a multiethnic and multiracial population whose roots are in *all* parts of the world, not exclusively Western Europe. Eurocentrism is only one among many perspectives from which cultural and historical contributions to *our* civilization may be viewed. It is vital, within an intellectually honest community, to respect multiculturality and diversity. If that is done, we will have made significant strides toward acknowledging that it is just as legitimate to study Afro-American literature, Ibn Kaldun, or Women's Studies, as it is to become an expert on Shakespeare, Sir Issac Newton, Machiavelli, or Walt Whitman.

Second, institutions must operationalize a renewed commitment to expanded educational opportunity. Aggressive efforts must be made to increase the number of college-going students from minority groups and to substantially reduce the inordinately high dropout rate among blacks and Hispanics. This commitment encompasses several components:

1. It means confronting the attitudes of faculty,

students, and administrators who rely on stereotypes about minorities when engaging in teaching, in social interaction, or in supervisory roles. It means confronting those persons who convey a belief that minorities "do not belong" to a university community. It means confronting those who perceive *every* minority as "naturally inferior," as one who has entered in some way other than "regular admission."

2. It means the participation of departments, especially those in which members of minority groups are underrepresented, in carefully planned and implemented collaborations with local junior and senior high school teachers, counselors, and administrators, to encourage increasing numbers of minorities to enter college.
3. It means the establishment of a three-tiered mentoring program involving a faculty member guiding, directing, and nurturing graduate and undergraduate students by joint action in research and creative activities. The anticipated outcome is heightened interest in the pursuit of advanced degrees and college or university teaching positions.
4. It also means the allocation of substantial resources for a strong recruitment program that will raise minority representation, both in terms of the student population and in terms of the hiring of faculty, to the level of critical mass within the institutional community. Recruitment of students involves marketing and selling the institution as an attractive learning environment, providing significant financial aid packages wherever such assistance is needed, demonstrating to students that the institution is genuinely committed to diversity among its student body and its faculty, and showing that its faculty is interested in the development of the intellectual capacity of all types of students—the talented, the gifted, and those (perhaps no less gifted) in need of special assistance.

Inasmuch as the median family income of blacks is only 56% that of whites and the median family income of Hispanics, including the Cuban population, is about 60% that of whites, and given recent projections of the one-year cost of a college education, the restructuring of financial aid programs will become increasingly imperative. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recently reported a study that showed that the average one-year cost of public college education is expected to rise from its current figure of $5,789 to $12,000 in 1998. The same study estimated that the average one-year cost of education at a private college, including tuition, room and board, will climb from its current average of $11,982 to $29,000 in 1998—just ten years from now. Since minorities are falling behind whites in salaries and wages, major problems can be anticipated in the future unless financial aid is restructured.

Third, recruiting, tenuring, and retaining faculty and administrators from minority groups must be given the highest priority. Racial and gender homogeneity within colleges, departments, and special units has no place in an academic institution. Racial and ethnic ghettos have no place in college and university administrations or in academic departments and institutes. The responsibility and commitment to diversity must be shared throughout the college or university. Each department should reflect diversity.

Rewards should only be given to those department or units that demonstrate success in this endeavor. A moratorium should be placed on the allocation of positions to departments or units that employ strategies and selection practices designed to avoid compliance with institutional policies advocating equity in access and diversity. Every department, every college, and every unit should have a clearly defined program for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented target populations. The institution's affirmative action or equal employment officer should work with institutional unit heads or appointed designees in ways that promote harmony in the realization of institutional goals. That officer must be empowered to determine the acceptability of a practice and to reject candidates presented from searches that violate institutional policies and guidelines.

In the meantime, institutional units—colleges, schools, departments, and the like—can become proactive on their own behalf. They can organize their own mentoring programs. They may establish their own "grow your own programs," whereby promising minority students can be "early identified," nurtured, trained, and hired, perhaps after serving in a post-doctoral situation elsewhere. Minority students can be awarded scholarships and graduate, research, and teaching assistantships through which they may be prepared for and socialized into their profession.

When minority members are hired as faculty members, especially those recruited into junior positions, an atmosphere of collegiality is essential. Collegiality extends from social interactions, to intellectual discourse and interest in each other's work, to assistance, guidance and advice from senior professors and senior administrators.

Fourth, it is especially important in 1988 for colleges and universities to create and maintain a positive institutional environment. All of its students, faculty, staff, and administrators should feel comfortable in the institution and secure in the knowledge that the institution is promoting growth, intellectual development, creativity, and a free exchange of ideas among its members without fear of verbal or physical abuse. This means that racial and ethnic intolerance will not be condoned. Violators of insti-

tutional norms of tolerance and respect for individual dignity will be dealt with in an effective manner. A positive institutional environment, one that fosters genuine appreciation for multiculturality, can be accomplished through several methods. For example, multicultural views and contributions may be incorporated into the subject matter of one's courses. Understandings may be broadened through administrative and faculty retreats devoted to intercultural relations. Faculty workshops may also be utilized for this purpose. Students could be required to take a course in human relations during their first or second year.

Fifth, students of all races must learn to reach out to each other, interact with each other, listen and learn from each other, understand each other's concerns, appreciate areas of common interests. They must learn to work together, to disagree civilly, maintaining respect for each person's individuality.

Sixth, it is my view that every institution ought to have a viable, fully functional Caucus of Black (Minority) Faculty, Staff, and Administrators. Members of this group must be committed to the goal of social justice for all persons. They must express a special concern for the collective interests of minority students, faculty, administrators, and staff and for fair and equitable treatment for all. This body should be proactive in the development of programs that address issues of recruitment, retention, support systems for students, and the equality of the institutional environment. They should be equally aggressive in anticipating and preventing personnel problems at the administrative level. They should be involved in mentoring and networking, in stimulating collegiality within the group and between that body and other members of the institution's community. They must monitor hiring and tenuring practices and assure the maintenance of pluralism.

Despite the retrogression so evident during the past seven years, it is my belief that the progress attained over the past 30 years of American race relations is a clear indicator of what can be done in our quest for interracial harmony and a better society.

The commitment of this body's members must not be situation-specific, that is, active involvement should not center around promotion of personal interests such as one's own tenure crisis or conflict with members of one's own unit. Participation involves appreciation of the diversity of the group's membership, the realization that diversity is strength. However, the group must always be unified when dealing with issues that ultimately impact on minorities, when confronting institutional discrimination and racism.

Despite the retrogression so evident during the past seven years, it is my belief that the progress attained over the past 30 years of American race relations is a clear indicator of what can be done in our quest for interracial harmony and a better society.

Finally, permit me to take this opportunity to express deep and profound gratitude to the William Monroe Trotter Institute, to its extremely capable director, Wornie Reed, to Frances Stubbs and other members of the Institute staff, for the organization, planning, and work involved in sponsoring this lecture and the reception. I thank all of you for coming and listening to me. These have been 18 years of challenge, enjoyment of teaching and research, and enrichment through my interactions with so many members of the UMass/Boston community. I wish you happiness, prosperity, enjoyment of your own work, and the very best for the future. Thank you sincerely!

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Scientific Racism: Persistence and Change

by
William Edwards

In the United States, World War II was hailed as the "war to end all wars." The war itself was considered a classic confrontation between the forces of liberal democracy and those of German fascism. Inherent in the ideology of nazism was Adolf Hitler's "final solution," the specter of rule by a nation committed to genocide. The Third Reich was dedicated to the proposition of "Aryan superiority." The Allied Forces, dedicated to the principles of democracy and freedom (though there were inconsistencies between principle and practice), vigorously opposed the geopolitical intentions of Hitler's regime and its pronounced policy of racial nationalism. Germany, of course, was not the only country that practiced racial politics. During the 1920s the United States itself was riding the crest of a wave of nativism based upon racial and ethnic prejudice.[1] Although it did not approach the degree of German fascism, prejudice in the United States has made its contribution to the phenomenon of scientific racism.

Allan Chase[2] has written one of the most provocative books on the history of scientific racism. He traces its roots to the economic philosophy of Thomas Malthus, in particular his essays on population. Chase demonstrates how the politics of scarcity can become a blueprint for the determination of who should live. Scarcities may occur in food, clean air, clean water, or living space. The Malthusian dictum that population growth will always exceed food supply enforces some form of selection and, politically, the justification of that selection. One method that has commonly been employed to accomplish this is the use of pseudoscientific ideas as a means to distinguish the "deserving" from the "undeserving." Structured upon the premise that genetic differences are indicators of qualitative types, scientific racism seeks to establish a vertical base for social differentiation and the determination of social policy. If it can be argued that the destiny of German society rests in the rise of the Aryan nation, it can be argued that the competition for living space can include the elimination of those declared undeserving or unfit.

The idea of scientific racism seems antithetical to a democratic society. Yet within this decade it has gained attention and has manifested itself in numerous ways. From the turn of century through the 1930s, scientific racism gained popularity in scholarly and popular literature. Reaching a highwater mark in the 1920s with the passage of the restrictive immigration bill (1924), scientific racism went into remission until the 1960s, when social changes in the society opened public opinion to a subtle but nonetheless invidious form of racism. While public debate focused on the more overt expressions of racial exclusion and discrimination, ideas of racial differences resurfaced and found a receptive audience among those desiring to maintain certain social arrangements. Gone were the archaic ideas of phrenology and craniology that assumed that human worth and behavior could be determined by body type. Gaining favor were studies that attempted to prove the primacy of heredity over environment in the determination of intelligence. If the language of the new proponents of genetic determinism differed from that used earlier in the century, the message was the same: genetic endowment was the great divider between superior and inferior types. More conclusively, these differences could not be mediated through legislation or public policy. The differences in races were an immutable fact ordained by the accident of genetics.

Historically, scientific racism was never a set of ideas existing outside the influence of public action.

Historically, scientific racism was never a set of ideas existing outside the influence of public action. The perceptions of human differences coexisted with the desirability of a stratified society. Thus, it is not surprising that some of the earlier theorists of

scientific racism were social scientists.[3] These social scientists framed questions of individual and social differences as political questions. It was therefore not surprising that McDougall could ask, "Is America Safe for Democracy?" or that Edward Ross would discuss "race suicide."[4] Each of their concerns suggested that the state, without effective means of control, faced a degeneration in the genetic and intellectual stock of its citizens. In the culmination of the "final solution," we see scientific racism raised to the level of state policy.

Pseudoscientific ideas regarding the human species have always found acceptance among those seeking to justify the subordination of others. In periods of major social changes these ideas tend to intensify as status positions are challenged or there is a perception of a threat. During the Reconstruction Era fears abounded that without strict controls the presumed unrestrained libidinous nature of blacks would imperil the white population.[5] When Eastern and Southern Europeans were stereotyped as inferior persons, their numbers were restricted from entrance into the United States in 1924. Historically, efforts to lift racial restrictions against blacks have been met with the rejoinder that to do so would result in the "mongrelization of the white race." In each instance the group was discredited because of an alleged feature of their genotype.

It was noted earlier that scientific racism receded after the 1920s. In fact, by the 1930s many of the tenets of scientific racism were falling into disfavor. Racial exclusion had effectively been reinforced by law and social practice. Until the 1940s few changes of major proportion had altered the barriers that kept blacks from enjoying full citizenship. The aftermath of World War II witnessed the erosion of some of those barriers. Black Americans aggressively, even militantly sought change. "This new status," wrote the historian John Hope Franklin, "arose not merely because a substantial portion of the gains made during the war were retained, but also because of the intensification of the drive, in several quarters, to achieve equality for blacks."[6] From the threatened march on Washington by A. Philip Randolph in 1941, through the administrations of Presidents Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower, black Americans gained greater access to housing, voting, and employment in federal jobs. Important victories were also won in the fight against segregation in public education. In terms of its national impact, the most significant of these victories came in 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.*

Many commentators and social analysts have noted the connection between the *Brown* decision and the Civil Rights Movement. For there was an aspect of the Court's decision that struck at the core of scientific racism. Although the primary legal question involved the philosophy of separate but equal, vital testimony in the case pointed to the psychological implications of segregated public education. In rendering its decision the Supreme Court said unanimously: "To separate them [black children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."[7]

The Supreme Court recognized that more was at stake than the legality of the state providing separate educational facilities for black and white children. What the Court decided was that the philosophy of separate but equal existed under the assumption of biological differences. Most importantly the Court decision draws attention to two aspects of scientific racism that cannot be overlooked. Before commenting on those two aspects it would be worthwhile to reassert a fundamental characteristic of scientific racism. Scientific racism is a means of maintaining power relationships rooted in the idea that rule is a right of the biologically superior. To assert that right it is first necessary to establish a context for the determination of superiority and inferiority.

Scientific racism seeks to establish a base for entitlement. Based upon the assumption that only the superior should decide, entitlement is the reward for those who are superior in genetic endowment. Through the system of public education most minority groups have pursued upward mobility. Blacks especially have sought through educational attainment to expand their range of social and professional opportunities. In the South these efforts were restricted by the proscription of legal segregation. Outside of the South educational access was restricted by de facto segregation, the result of discrimination in neighborhood settlement patterns. These methods of proscription, based upon racial differences, have served to restrict claims to entitlement. When the Court argued that segregation had the effect of generating feelings of inferiority, it tacitly acknowledged that race was a key element in restricting entitlement. Therefore, the *Brown* case became a critical turning point in this society, not only in terms of education, but in the much broader sense of alterations in the system of entitlement. Opponents of change resisted the quarantee of access to people they considered unequal. If restraints to access could be overturned through the courts, could they be reinstated by other means?

In the years following the *Brown* decision, there was renewed interest in mental testing. The preoccupation with quantification resembled that following World War I and the administration of the first Army Intelligence Test in 1917. As state and municipal action mounted to either implement or circumvent the mandate of the Court, increasing attention was given to differential results in mass testing of school children. The argument that emerged, in the

The quantification of alleged racial differences in aptitude gave an aura of scientific objectivity to what had lost respectability, and legal backing, as a prejudicial attitude.

tradition of scientific racism, was that genetic endowment counted for more than environment in mental aptitude. If black children performed less well than whites, a substantial portion of the explanation for this rested in their genetic constitution. Their abilities and opportunities were immutably, genotypically, determined. Even if greater access became available, performance would be naturally limited. Society could not be "blamed" for what was essentially an act of nature. The claims regarding the inferior abilities of blacks were not new. What was new was the extent to which quantitative data were being employed to support an old argument. The quantification of alleged racial differences in aptitude gave an aura of scientific objectivity to what had lost respectability, and legal backing, as a prejudicial attitude.

The debate over the differences between test scores of black and white children reached a high-water mark in 1969. Arthur Jensen, professor of education at the University of California, Berkeley, published an article in the *Harvard Educational Review* entitled, "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?"[8] Among his findings was the conclusion that intelligence is 80% inherited and 20% environmental. Whatever may have been Jensen's intentions or claims to free and open inquiry, the results of his work ignited a furious public debate on the efficient use of public funds for the education of black children.

Some critics of President Johnson's Great Society programs found in Jensen's study supportive evidence for their call for a retrenchment in public funding for social programs. The racial intent in many of these arguments was hidden behind an appeal to efficiency in government. If intelligence were overwhelmingly the result of genetic endowment, no amount of public funds could change that condition. While those who accepted the genetic-based link to intelligence were not necessarily adverse to the education of black children, their proposals called for educating them to the limits of their presumed capacity. These arguments bear a striking similarity to proposals prior to and just after the turn of the century. At that time it was not uncommon for Social Darwinists to advocate education that would train the "lowly classes" for specific slots in the labor force. The "lowly classes" (who were not necessarily black) would constitute a stratum who could be controlled by their access to skills and reduced to bargaining their labor for existence. Thus, on the basis of their alleged inferior genotype, entitlement was restricted.

Jensen's work, and a subsequent controversial publication by Christopher Jencks,[9] also fueled public debate regarding compensatory educational programs. These programs shared the premise that the life course of individuals and groups could be altered through policy intervention. The inheritance argument, on the other hand, questioned whether social intervention of a compensatory nature would produce significant changes relative to the expenditure of funds for such programs. While these debates developed, the IQ controversy was augmented by the rise in concern over "merit." In fact, the two ideas merged in the work of Richard Herrnstein.[10] Publications such as *Commentary* and the *Public Interest* became principal forums over the issue of meritocracy and democracy. Arguing that attempts to improve the life chances of a group was antithetical to the principle of individual liberty, conservative ideologues attacked many interventionist programs as antidemocratic. They argued that these programs granted to the disadvantaged an unearned privilege. What had begun as a quantifier for the exclusion of certain European groups as immigrants in 1917 had reached full political fruition in what Leon Kamin calls "the science and politics of IQ."

If the debates in the late 1960s and 1970s were not as overtly racist as those during the first quarter of the century, there were striking similarities nonetheless. The appeal to the inheritability of intelligence restates essentially the same argument that social classes are the products of differential genetic stock. Just as scientific racism in the 1920s and earlier represented a value premise, the arguments regarding merit contained a value premise. What is meritorious? How is merit determined and who makes the determination? Is there an absolute or relative basis to merit? Does heredity play a role in merit? What these questions imply is a vertical ordering of society, a system of stratification. Invariably this means a placement of individuals or groups along a continuum, although not necessarily a permanent one. Such attempts employ the trappings of verifiability in lieu of prejudice. This is the very base of scientific racism. "Scientific racism attempts to make inferiority a matter of science not prejudice."[12] Methodologically, scientific racism attempts to accentuate intergroup differences at the expense of intragroup differences. The history of scientific racism indicates that class differences have been frequently invoked to insulate privilege, restrain mobility, and limit entitlement.

There were two schemes that surfaced during the 1970s that closely resembled Francis Galton's notion of hereditary genius and the politics of eugenics. Stanford University professor William Shockley advocated during the early 1970s a sterilization bonus plan. Concerned about the dysgenic consequences

of "too many babies born to Negroes," Shockley offered a financial incentive for those blacks whose IQ fell below the norm of 100 to be sterilized. Basing his plan on the premise that black performance on intelligence test was a measure of their inferior biological constitution vis-a-vis whites, Shockley proposed a payment of $1,000 for every point below 100 they scored. Without a definitive check on the birth rate of the genetically inferior blacks, Shockley feared genetic enslavement.

Prior to the development of the sterilization bonus plan, Shockley speculated on a "white gene" hypothesis. This notion held that for every 1% of "Caucasian genes" in the bloodstream of blacks, their IQ rose one test point. Shockley concluded that since lower IQ black mothers are likely to have more children, they are subjecting their offspring to genetic enslavement, and the society would realize the consequences of dysgenics. How he determined the relationship between IQ and birth rate was never firmly established, nor on what basis he assumed a fixed ration between IQ and the quantity of "white genes" in the blood of blacks.

Harvard professor of psychology Richard Herrnstein shared Shockley's concerns regarding the possibility of "genetic enslavement." He offered no financial bonus plan, but he did advocate a tracking system linked to the decennial census. In an interview cited by Allan Chase, Herrnstein ". . . advocated that IQ test scores be recorded by the U.S. Census takers in order to enable our lawmakers to observe dysgenic or eugenic trends in American society."[13] He believed that, if at some future time, it was necessary to limit population growth, ". . . we could use census information on IQ to decide how and when to limit it."[14] Herrnstein's suggestion establishes a critical relationship between population size and measured intelligence. But most startling in his proposal is that living space can be a factor, not of need, but of genetics.

Apparently those with low IQ scores would become the most expendable, would forfeit any entitlement to living space because of their IQ. Herrnstein's plan reflects a historic assumption regarding intelligence and scientific racism: that is, intelligence is a fixed entity, conditioned only by the accident of birth. Herrnstein also attempts to influence public policy by implying a scientific basis for decision making. In the main his proposal is a companion to the idea that it is possible to quantify human value.

A second major aspect of scientific racism that emerges from the *Brown* case is its link to power relations. The restraint or denial of entitlement is a restraint on the exercise of power. As mentioned earlier, scientific racism is a means of maintaining differential power relations through the assertion of superiority or inferiority. It is an anti-egalitarian notion. It supports the proposition that nature decrees racial difference and that difference is significant in the degree of power each is capable of exercising. In the *Brown* case, the Court declared that educational systems had been constructed so that race became the basis for the denial of choice. For blacks, the denial of choice meant the inability to assert an authoritative voice in the decisions affecting how and under what conditions they were to receive public education.

Throughout this discussion it has been asserted that scientific racism seeks to limit the participation of those believed to be inferior. This limitation necessarily restricts the exercise of power over many aspects of their lives. The same is true where race has been used as a means to set a group apart, by so doing inferring its inferiority. Their choices have been proscribed by their birth. Their ability to negotiate with the larger community is likewise proscribed. A major social change such as the *Brown* case forces an adjustment or realignment in historic patterns of power relations. Many of the assumptions that defined the old patterns entered into the process of adjustment. Blacks were believed no less inferior because the Court had ruled against segregated schools.

Since the nineteenth century, scientific racism has confirmed the fact that there is power in an idea. As a collective body of thought, scientific racism has been a powerful inducement to action. Winthrop Jordan,[15] George Fredrickson,[16] Stephen Jay Gould,[17] and Thomas Gossett[18] have clearly demonstrated the organizational power of an idea regarding the presumption of differences in the human species. Their studies represent persuasive evidence of the political consequences of scientific racism. They also affirm W.I. Thomas's adage, "If a man defines a situation as real, it is real in its consequences." Throughout its existence and its manifestation in racial segregation, scientific racism has produced ideas that have sustained the belief that blacks are inherently inferior. Many of the tenets of racial superiority and inferiority compose the body of thought presented in school texts. This has especially been the case in biology.

In recent years arguments concerning affirmative action and minority admissions into the universities have contained the seeds of scientific racism, if not its essence. With an increase in the number of blacks entering previously or predominantly white universities, there arose cries that educational standards would have to be lowered to accommodate them. Some black students on these campuses faced the stigma of being labeled "special admits" simply because of their racial identity. The presumption was that they could not have been admitted under the routine standards of the university. These examples may not immediately suggest themselves as scientific racism, but they perform the same function. They assume a difference in mental capacity. They

also assume that in the absence of overt prejudice, blacks could not succeed on the basis of ability alone. Where differences in the performance of white students may be perceived as a routine distribution of grades, racial connotations often accompany a similar distribution among blacks.

Scientific racism in its traditional form has lost currency in today's society. Gone are the anthropometric measures that presumably located blacks at the low end of an evolutionary scale. Gone also are the crude assumptions regarding anatomic type and social behavior. Our society has become more tolerant of differences, but that does not imply that equity prevails. There is still controversy regarding the application and use of tests. Testing has the possibility of abuse – for example, the testing of servicemen during World War I. These tests were used to verify existing ideas concerning the inferiority of groups of immigrants. Today testing is being used to reinforce notions on the inheritability of intelligence or performance capacity.

Increasing interest has been given to sociobiology recently. While the findings in this field offer new challenges to the understanding of human behavior, it has the same potential for abuse as any idea that roots human behavior in a genotypic context. In a society still predisposed to discrimination, subtle results in sociobiology can become an "objective" rationale for public action. The history of scientific racism has indicated that "objective" data may have adverse subjective consequences. The study of genetics in the field of etiology is not the same as pursuing a qualitative difference in human beings. The protection of the rights of human subjects in scientific studies must never allow a repetition of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment[19] where racial ideas permitted 400 black men to go untreated for a communicable disease.

Scientific racism has caused the deaths of countless millions of people because of the presumption that they were different, inferior, undeserving. In the absence of an absolute scale of merit and in the presence of "final solutions" such as Adolph Hitler's, we should be wary of labels, and particularly wary of labels that claim to have a scientific foundation. Any practice that contracts rather than expands the human potential is pernicious, no practice more so than prejudice as it is expressed in scientific racism.

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The National Congress of Black Faculty

by

Ronald W. Walters

On October 23, 1987, at Howard University, 175 black faculty members from all over the nation convened to address the decreasing presence of black faculty members in U.S. institutions of higher education and to create the National Congress of Black Faculty (NCBF). The Congress is intended to provide advocacy and service for black faculty members of all disciplines. The Congress heard from a variety of speakers. In the keynote address Congressman Major Owens (12th-NY), Chair of the Select Committee on Education of the U.S. House of Representatives, challenged the group to address the crisis of black higher education by creating an aggressive organization of black faculty. A second keynote address was given by Congressman Walter Fauntroy (Del-DC), President of the National Black Leadership Roundtable, who welcomed NCBF into the black leadership family and urged that its membership abide by the Black Leadership Family Plan.

Insights on "The Status of Black Faculty" were given by Dr. Reginald Wilson, Director of the Office of Black Concerns of the American Council on Education; Dr. Margaret Simms, Senior Research Associate of the Joint Center for Political Studies and Editor of the *Review of Black Political Economy*; John Smith, Special Assistant to Congressman Augustus Hawkins, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee; and Dr. Robert Hill, Research Consultant and sociologist.

Representatives of other state-wide organizations of black faculty also participated: Dr. J. Owens Smith, President of the California Association of Black Faculty and Staff, and Dr. Charles Morris, Chairman of the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education (ICBCHE).

Also present were representatives of black scholarly organizations: Dr. Aldon Morris, Associate Professor, University of Michigan, President of the Association of Black Sociologists; Dr. Ofuatey Kodjoe, Associate Professor, CUNY Queens College, President of the African Heritage Studies Association; Dr. Diane Pinderhughes, Associate Professor, University of Illinois, President-Elect of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists; and Dr. Samuel Meyers, Jr., Associate Professor and Chair, Afro-American Studies Department, University of Maryland, President of the National Economic Association.

The Problem: The Muted Voice and Abilities of the Black Scholar

In recent years serious problems have arisen in the field of black higher education that have not been subject to systematic examination and corrective programming. These problems have magnified the necessity for a vehicle through which black faculty might be mobilized to contribute to the enhancement of their own professional opportunities and thus make a significant impact upon black higher education in general. Some of these problems are discussed below (without any inference of priority).

> *Now that the pressure for affirmative action has subsided, there has been a concomitant decrease in the recruitment and promotion of junior black faculty.*

Hiring, Promotion, and Tenure

Now that the pressure for affirmative action has subsided, there has been a concomitant decrease in the recruitment and promotion of junior black faculty. Serious tenure problems involving black faculty have come to public attention; black candidates have been denied tenure despite their strong qualifications. Intervention in such cases has generally been limited to the ad hoc organization of letter-writing campaigns.

The problem of black faculty career instability is intensified by the fact that there exists a generation of scholars at the tenure level who, earlier in their careers, were saddled with administrative positions and extra-university duties that have not counted as positive considerations in decisions on tenure. As a result of this and other competitive problems, black faculty are often not receiving promotions or tenure. Their "special contributions" to the university are not being aggressively explained and promoted. The base of supportive and sensitive white university officials appears to be dwindling. This problem will only be exacerbated by the fact that fewer black students are entering college as a whole and fewer are preparing to become college professors. According to the 1985 report on "Minorities In Higher Education," "The higher education community must continue to address the issues of *losses in participation at all levels for blacks*; the segregation of Hispanics; the retention and graduation of minority students,

both undergraduate and graduate; and the lack of growth for minorities in faculty and staff ranks."[1] One net effect of this comprehensive problem will be the lack of black college faculty and the continued instability of those black faculty members who survive.

The Status of Black Students

The evidence is accumulating that black students are deciding to forego college, especially four-year institutions.[2] This trend is alarming because of the well-established relationship between black social mobility and higher education. Black faculty at all colleges have roots in various communities around the country and constitute a formidable resource that, *if mobilized*, could make a positive national impact upon this problem. Black faculty constitute important role models for leadership in many communities and could give much-needed perspective to the often unrealistic wage expectations of young people who are considering entry into the profession.

In addition, black students on many white college campuses are currently having to endure a reemergence of racism. In the Spring of 1987 some 20 major universities experienced episodes of racism. In some cases, outside committees were used to review complaints. At Brown University, for example, in the Fall of 1985 a "visiting committee" went to review the complaints of black students. In March of 1986 a similar committee helped to negotiate better conditions for the black campus community at the University of Michigan. These are appropriate exercises of responsibility on the part of those scholars and administrators who served on such committees. However, these are *ad hoc* efforts. A *permanent committee* of black faculty and administrators is needed, not only to help in the initial resolution of problems on many campuses, but also to perform vital post-crisis monitoring.

Research Funding

Black scholars have difficulty attracting research funds for a variety of reasons. Since a chief source of funding is the Federal government, it strikes one that traditionally there has been scant attention paid to this problem from a public policy standpoint. Considerable funding is provided nonblack faculty for the study of problems in the black community, while black researchers are grossly underfunded. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus and some Federal agency administrators have been sensitive to this problem, but one does not recall black scholars ever being called to testify before Congressional committees on their research needs, nor does one recall black scholars demanding that right. Neither have black college presidents been successful in expanding the amount of funds available for research at their own institutions; research funding accounts for an average of only 3% of their general budgets.

Thus, despite the publicity with which Presidents Carter and Reagan signed executive orders assisting black colleges, there has been scant progress and little additional assistance to black faculty who are not at black colleges. Given what Blinda Tucker calls a "discouraging state of affairs," it is conceivable that a black faculty organization, properly staffed and focused, might make some inroads into this problem.[3]

Publication

Black faculty find that the journals representing the various disciplines to which they belong do not accept articles written from the black perspective. Since the professional advancement of blacks and other faculty are predicated upon the frequency of their appearance in such publications, perhaps members of a black faculty organization could initiate an intensive investigation and dialogue on this issue with the mainline journals (especially in the social and behavioral sciences), many of which have not published the work of black scholars in decades.

Perhaps even more important is the organization of financial, intellectual, and technical support for the few black scholarly journals that do publish the work of black scholars. It is also critical for representation to be made to faculties and administrators, who are often not familiar with black scholarly journals, as to the indispensability of these publications in the advancement of black scholarship.

In summary, the simple fact is that the voice of the black scholar is largely silent because there has been no significant institutionalized base from which to make a collective response to any of the problems addressed above.

Time for Action: The Necessity for NCBF

At the moment, the black faculty community is organized along disciplinary lines. Most faculty retain active membership in major professional associations; some are also active in black scholarly organizations or caucuses. They have retained membership in the major (predominantly white) organizations not only to have access to the legitimacy and resources that provide them mobility within the respective disciplines, but also on the underlying assumption that these organizations will care for their professional needs. There is much evidence that this has not, in fact, been the case, and this neglect constitutes a strong incentive for the development of a black organization to meet professional nondisciplinary needs. This neglect is felt more critically by the black scholar because in many circumstances he or she is isolated by the nonunion status of faculty and by the lack of a supportive department or university administration. Therefore, we have created an orga-

nization to represent black faculty in the United States—the National Congress of Black Faculty (NCBF).

The national meeting last fall was organizational. Activities included the election of officers, the passage of an interim Charter, the formation of a Board of Directors, the formation of a nine-member Charter Review Commission, and the formation of a 17-member Special Committee on the '88 Congress. Councils were formed in such areas as Hiring, Promotion and Tenure; Research and Education; Publication; and Institutional Relations. Each council presented a series of recommendations to the Congress for action.

> *. . . a highly mobilized black professoriate could make a significant impact upon many black faculty problems.*

I have been asked by many people what such an organization could accomplish. I answer that a highly mobilized black professoriate could make a significant impact upon many black faculty problems.

- We need to challenge the standards of promotion and tenure that suggest that scholarship involving the black experience, especially written from the black perspective or appearing in black publications, is automatically inferior.
- We need to call attention to the "lock-out" of black faculty from evaluation boards and panels that decide the allocation of research funds and fellowships. "We can't find a black who is qualified" must be exposed as serving a prejudicial and disempowering standard of qualification.
- We need to mobilize 20,000 black faculty members to go into the community, to reconnect with its life, to motivate black students to become professors.
- We need to become the central clearinghouse for information about black faculty recruitment, for media contacts, and for the introduction of black social issues into the public policy process. We need a national newsletter with information especially tailored to black faculty interests.
- We need to work with the Congressional Black Caucus, members of the Congress, representatives of the federal education establishment, and foundations working to improve conditions for black faculty.
- We need to sit down with journal editors to discuss why they have not published a black scholar in decades, to sit down with book publishers to destroy the myth that black people do not read. We need to open up opportunities for black scholars to publish their work.
- We need to challenge the sham of affirmative action hiring by many universities where "hire and fire" is the goal rather than stability. We need to establish our own censure list of universities where we find "hire-fire" or "no-hire" patterns exist.
- We need to establish our own version of the standards necessary for advancement, including service on committees, student counseling, etc.
- We need to have black academic excellence recognized by establishing prizes for the best work and by honoring our elders who pioneered the profession.

Because many of us believe that we should organize in our own interest and address the issues raised above, we have organized the National Congress of Black Faculty. A decision was made to have a one-year interim set of officers, to refine the organization of NCBF, to expand its membership, and to point towards establishing a staff operation in Washington, D.C.

We invite you to join us.

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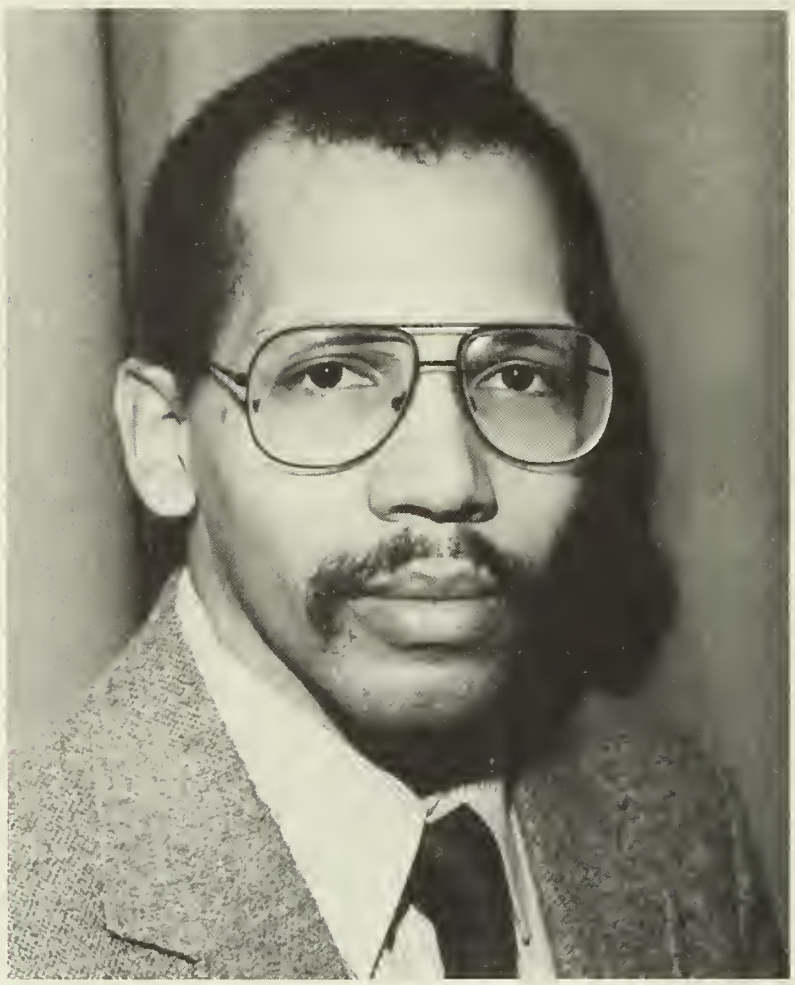
Book Review

by
James Jennings



The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, The Underclass, and Public Policy by William Julius Wilson, University of Chicago Press, 245 pp., $19.95.

William Julius Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged* represents the debate of the last 10 to 20 years about race, poverty, and public policy. Part of Wilson's rationale for the book is the belief that conservative policy analysts and ideologues have gained the upper hand in presenting their case about black urban poverty. He hopes to provide a framework of liberal analysis that will allow a better understanding of the causes of the intensifying black poverty.

Wilson presents several powerful arguments and supporting data that debunk the claims of some conservative social policy analysts regarding urban poverty and race. The book also makes significant contributions to the state of knowledge regarding race, poverty, and public policy. But despite the achievements of the book, Wilson is limited by his assumption that debates about urban poverty and race must be confined between liberals and conservatives.

The author amasses impressive evidence that the major cause of growing poverty and pathology in the black community is the increasing joblessness of black males, as well as the declining number of black males available to support families. He writes:

> . . . contrary to popular opinion, there is little evidence to provide a strong case for welfare as the primary cause of family breakups, female-headed households, and out-of-wedlock births . . . . the evidence for the influence of male joblessness is much more persuasive . . . . we argue that both the black delay in marriage and the lower rate of remarriage, each of which is associated with high percentages of out-of-wedlock births and female-headed households, can be directly tied to the labor-market status of black males. As we have documented, black women, especially young black women, are facing a shrinking pool of "marriageable" (i.e., economically stable) men.

Social Isolation

The well-documented breakup of the black family has occurred under a context of "social isolation," and not a "culture of poverty" as some liberals-turned-conservatives contend. While the latter concept emphasizes individual and group attitudes as well as a social and psychological pathology, the former emphasizes "the class transformation of the inner city, including the growing concentration of poverty in the inner-city neighborhoods."

This transformation, in Wilson's view, cannot be understood without considering the effects of fundamental changes in the urban economy on the lower-income minorities. Wilson's concept of social isolation is much more comprehensive and useful than the culture-of-poverty thesis, which presumes the social system to be neutral in its effects on individuals and groups despite their different relative economic, cultural, and political positions.

Wilson boldly calls for a comprehensive public policy to address black poverty that will "require a radicalism that neither Democratic nor Republican

parties have as yet been realistic enough to propose." In his final chapter, Wilson presents his public policy proposals. These include programs responding not to a culture of poverty, but rather to those social and economic forces that have produced the truly disadvantaged and the pathology associated with this status. Wilson calls for job training programs, balanced economic growth, and full employment.

> *It is one thing to show that broad economic forces and demography should be the major targets of a program for social change aimed at benefitting blacks, rather than job discrimination on the basis of race; it is quite another thing to analyze social situations involving blacks as if race were no longer significant.*

De-emphasizing Race

Despite Wilson's contributions to debates of urban poverty and race, several weaknesses remain in *The Truly Disadvantaged.* He tends to de-emphasize the role of race in American society. It is one thing to show that broad economic forces and demography should be the major targets of a program for social change aimed at benefitting blacks, rather than job discrimination on the basis of race; it is quite another thing to analyze social situations involving blacks as if race were no longer significant.

While many intellectuals, both black and white, would agree with Wilson that genuine social change must address society's fundamental economic and technological dynamics, rather than discrimination per se, many would see the denial of a racial reality in America as unfounded, to say the least. A report issued by the Atlanta-based Center for Democratic Renewal, for example, documented more than 2,900 cases of "hate violence" ranging from vandalism to murder between 1980 and 1986.

According to some accounts the problem of racial violence has been increasing. This has led the U.S. Congress to begin investigating racial violence under the auspices of its Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on criminal justice. Wilson correctly points out that problems of poverty, crime, and family destabilization reflect broad forces of "societal disorganization" rather than merely racism or job discrimination.

Wilson seems to be moving toward a class analysis of the social ills that he is studying. But this does not negate nor run contrary to the fact of an existing racial hierarchy, which helps maintain the status quo. Wilson's implied dismissal of episodes like Howard Beach and Forsyth County and his downplaying of continuing urban de facto segregation reflects a lack of touch with the everyday reality of black Americans.

Intellectual Diversity

Wilson's view of the black activist sector as intellectually monolithic is also problematic. Throughout the book he makes references to "black" viewpoints without citation. It can be argued, however, that socioeconomic differences within the black community have become a major theme in the writings and speeches of black scholars and activists.

In many instances Wilson's discussion of these viewpoints suggests an unfamiliarity with ongoing debates in the black community about such issues as urban poverty, class, and race. This is typical of the ideological blindness of many "liberal" scholars who seek to discuss or explain the positions of blacks on public issues without full knowledge of their myriad writings, speeches, or scholarship, and the spectrum of ideology in the black community. Wilson and other liberal writers may overlook this diversity because their thinking, approaches, and analyses of social issues in the black community are confined within a liberal-conservative paradigm.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of Wilson's book is his romanticism about politics. The public policy proposals that he briefly notes would indeed have a major impact on the black underclass in some of America's cities. He is correct in calling for solutions that would seem radical compared to solutions traditionally advocated by the two national parties. But in discussing how such a program can be implemented, the author states simplistically that the agenda "for liberal policymakers is to improve the life chances of truly disadvantaged groups such as the ghetto underclass by emphasizing programs to which the more advantaged groups of all races and class backgrounds can positively relate."

In other words, if we can somehow couch beneficial public policy for blacks in ways that either do not threaten whites or that powerful interest groups can also benefit from, we may be able to create programs to help the black underclass. This reflects Wilson's meekness regarding class analysis. It also plays into the hands of neoconservative thinkers who would argue that liberal public policy is keeping blacks in a position of dependency. Wilson's liberal political solution calls for black interests to be confined and limited by what powerful white groups may believe is in their best interests.

Coalition Problems

He suggests that the problems of the truly disadvantaged may require "nonracial" solutions such as full employment, balanced economic growth, and manpower training and education. Such efforts would certainly go much further than affirmative action palliatives, but how is this transformation to be accomplished? Many of the historical and current social, cultural, and economic benefits enjoyed

by whites are due to entrenched class and race hierarchies. And while some public issues can be resolved by bringing together the needs of various social sectors, many other issues are zero-sum in nature.

Wilson also speaks of broad, reform-oriented coalitions, but such coalitions will not emerge until the truly disadvantaged organize themselves politically. Many liberal (and white "leftist") scholars seem to shy away from the need for the truly disadvantaged to organize politically. This is important not only as a coalition-building tool, but also as a way for them to begin controlling those economic and social forces transforming their neighborhoods.

The broad political coalition that Wilson calls for will not respond effectively to the needs of the poorer sectors of the black community if these sectors are but "junior" partners. Blacks must organize themselves on the basis of enhancing the quality of life in their communities and on the basis of political equality with their potential allies in any coalition.

Wilson's book provides an excellent liberal rejoinder to the neoconservatives. Yet, despite its important contribution to ongoing public policy debates regarding race and poverty, it falls short of a complete class and racial analysis and still approaches the black urban poor as politically incompetent.

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